



The Maypop



News and Notes, March 2021

Monthly Programs Support Local Efforts

The online January and February chapter programs provided attendees a wealth of information regarding the power of native plants and ways to incorporate native plants into their landscapes.

Feb. 13, Kirsten Sharp-Ortega, Passionflower member and designer and co-owner of My Dragonfly Gardens, spoke about Creating Harmony with Natives and HOAs.

Jan. 13, Stacey Matrazzo from the Florida Wildflower Foundation shared detailed information from her book, Native Plants for Florida Gardens.

If you missed either presentation, or want to view them again, you can access both programs here:

passionflower.fnpschapters.org/news.

The next online program is scheduled for March 10 and will delve into the topic of legislation and native plant landscapes.



A screenshot from the Jan. 13 online Zoom presentation by Stacey Matrazzo.

Upcoming Events – Save the Dates

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the chapter is offering online programs and activities that allow for socially distant interaction. Here's what's planned for the next few months:

- 🌿 Wednesday, March 10
Online Program: Legislation and Talking Points for Native Landscaping
6–7:30 p.m.
- 🌿 Saturday, March 13
Natal Grass Pull
Warea Tract, Clermont
11 a.m.–2 p.m.
- 🌿 Wednesday, March 24
Online Chapter Meeting
5:30–7 p.m.
- 🌿 Saturday, March 27
Gardening Day
Lake Louisa State Park
9–11 a.m.
- 🌿 Saturday, April 10
Online Program: Plant ID and Chapter Annual Meeting
10 –11:30 a.m.
- 🌿 Saturday, April 24
Gardening Day
Lake Louisa State Park
9–11 a.m.
- 🌿 Saturday, May 8
Online Program: Maintaining a Florida Native Yard
10 –11:30 a.m.

Watch your email or visit the Passionflower Chapter [website](#) and Facebook [events page](#) for more details.



The Power of Volunteering

Four members of the Passionflower Chapter – Melanie Simon, Chris Parker, Donna Bingaman and Denise Palermo – have regularly shown up for gardening workdays at Lake Louisa State Park.

Due to these dedicated individuals and other Gardening Day volunteers, the Ranger Station Butterfly Garden is looking better for park visitors, and the Habitat Garden is finally getting completed.

Interested in learning more or helping out? Contact us at Passionflower.FNPS@gmail.com

Need Help Identifying Native Plants?

Keep your eyes open and your camera ready when you're in your yard, taking a hike or walking in your neighborhood.

The chapter's plan for the April 10 online program is to walk through the steps and resources you can use for plant identification, using some "mystery plants" as examples.

This is where you come in: For the program to work, plant photos are needed! If you'd like to participate, send in several photos of your mystery plant – one showing the overall plant size and shape, a close-up of the leaves and a close-up of the flower, seed head or bud, if present.

Program leaders will do their best to identify the plant and determine whether it is native, non-native or invasive. A few of the submissions will be used as examples for the program.

Please email your photos to Passionflower.FNPS@gmail.com by March 21.



Annual Meeting and Elections

Passionflower's annual meeting will be held online, via Zoom, on April 10. At the session, which is also a program meeting on identifying mystery plants, members will vote for chapter officers: president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and chapter representative.

Candidates are needed for all positions for the 2021–2022 year, which begins June 1. Please help Passionflower continue operating by volunteering a few hours each month to fill one of these positions.

Volunteering can help you learn new skills, understand the organization better, help other members and the community, set an example, gain a better sense of purpose and stay physically healthy.

Executive Committee meetings are held monthly, currently via Zoom, and are facilitated by chapter leaders.

For more information, check out the Passionflower Officer Duties posted at <https://passionflower.fnpschapters.org/resources>.

Support FNPS Through Amazon Smile

Did you know you can support the good work of FNPS every time you shop on Amazon? Sign into your Amazon account at smile.amazon.com, select **Florida Native Plant Society, Inc. Melbourne FL** as your charity, and Amazon will contribute every time you make a purchase. Thank you for supporting FNPS!

Annual Conference Coming Soon

Programs will be offered virtually this year



The 40th annual conference of the Florida Native Plant Society, Florida's premier event focusing on the preservation, conservation and restoration of our natural lands, ecosystems and local communities, will be held virtually May 14–16.

There will be something for everyone at this conference, including:

- Amazing speakers on a wide range of subjects: major conservation initiatives, restoration projects, public policy, and regional initiatives (Friday and Saturday)
- Workshops
- Cutting-edge research
- Current issues in restoration and conservation
- Landscaping for homeowners and urban planners
- Networking and advocacy opportunities
- Online silent auction

For more information, visit www.fnps.org and click on the Events tab.

Native Plant Conservation

Contributed by Melanie Simon, chapter president

FNPS has to be about more than just promoting pretty flowers for our home landscapes – our mission is preserving, conserving and restoring native plant communities. As more native habitats disappear to development, protecting remaining natural areas is crucial.

One of only eight remaining populations of the Claspng Warea (*Warea amplexifolia* – a delicately beautiful endangered native plant endemic to sandhill habitat in Central Florida) and home to other endangered species is right in our backyard – the Warea Tract. Of particular concern at the Warea Tract is invasive Natal grass (*Melinis repens*). An effort to work with adjacent landowners to reduce Natal grass infestation is trending in the right direction, but manual removal is necessary to protect the endangered plant population.

Join us on March 13 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for a Natal grass removal workday. Bring water and a snack, and wear long pants and closed shoes. No particular knowledge or skills are needed – just the ability to work for a few hours pulling weeds.



Gain the satisfaction of knowing you have helped protect a unique example of Florida's and Lake County's past, valuable pocket of biodiversity, and haven for rare endangered plants while you enjoy this lovely habitat and its many native plants.

The Dainty Blue Toadflax

In early spring, you may see a delicate sea of blue/lavender in meadows, fields, pastures and roadsides and other disturbed sites. This is often Canadian or Blue Toadflax (*Linaria canadensis*), a native wildflower found in almost all counties in Florida, although Lyre-leaf sage has a similar growth habit and color. Canadian Toadflax is a great harbinger of spring in Florida, as it blooms when the weather becomes consistently warm and sunny, usually in late February.

In mass, Canadian Toadflax makes a stunning display. But single plants are almost unnoticeable – flowers are only about a third of an inch long and the stalks are thin with sparse, with almost needle-like leaves. Blooms resemble a snapdragon with a 3-lobed lower lip, smaller 2-lobed upper lip and a nectar spur at the back of the flower. Plants have multiple blooms per stalk and can have multiple stalks.

Blooms last about a month, go to seed and then the plant dies. Canadian Toadflax self-seeds easily with wind-dispersed seeds.

Canadian or Blue Toadflax Fast Facts

Scientific name: <i>Linaria canadensis</i>	Family: Plantaginaceae
Zones: 8A to 10B	Height: 1 to 2 feet
Type: Annual (occasionally biennial)	Soil: Dry, well-drained sandy soils to moist, loamy soils
Propagation: Seed	Light: Full sun to light shade
Blooms: Early spring	

Its small size, short lifespan and reseeding make this wildflower a poor candidate for use in more formal landscapes; in fact, it is often considered a lawn weed. Its preferred use is for natural landscapes and habitat restorations. Seeds are available at the Florida Wildflower Cooperative.

Canadian Toadflax is an early spring nectar source for many pollinators and a larval host to the Buckeye butterfly.



Toadflax in empty downtown Clermont lot.

Check This Out!

If you're searching for information on trees, plants, native species, landscaping or gardening, don't overlook the UF/FAS Master Gardener site. Jamie Daugherty, Master Gardener Coordinator at the UF/IFAS Lake County Extension, invites you to access the library of Master Gardener Newsletters. The newsletters cover a variety of topics and offer loads of helpful material. All issues of the newsletters can be found here:

<https://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/lake/lawn-and-garden---florida-friendly-landscaping/newsletters>. To be added to their mailing list for the newsletter or receive Master Gardener class information, email juwanda.rowell@ufl.edu.

Chapter Leadership

- President: Melanie Simon
- Vice President: Laura Bennett-Kimble
- Secretary: Donna Bingaman
- Treasurer: David Biega
- Chapter Representative: Melanie Simon
- Communications Director: Laura Bennett-Kimble
- Membership Chair: Kathy Peres

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